

January 28, 2010

Brothers & Sisters in Catholic Education,

When I was working on the first of my graduate degrees I had the good fortune to be a Research Assistant for an internationally known authoress, Dr. Ann McCrary Juhasz. I like to think of the work I did for Dr. Juhasz as my “things I learned while learning other stuff” education. Dr. Juhasz would come into my office and tell me a topic she needed researched and “the results placed on her desk in 48 hours”. So, off to the library I would go and begin to read articles, journal entries, speeches, and any other form of written communication I could find (no computer searches in those days!). Now, since many authors/speakers would give their presentations catchy titles I frequently read material that wasn't satisfactory for Dr. Juhasz' needs. I joke that while I earned a Masters in Psychology, I probably qualified for degrees in several other areas due to the research I did that wasn't applicable to her needs.

It was just such research that lead me to know more about what it was like to be Catholic in the mid 1800's and about the growth of Catholic schools. To be a Catholic in that time was to be discriminated against in almost all facets of American life. About this time the American Catholic Bishops decided that was in the best interests of our religion and the children of Catholic parents that we opened our own schools. Some people referred to these as 'parallel schools', that is, schools offering the same academic materials with the addition of religion classes. They did this because frequently Catholic children were forced to leave the public schools without receiving an education. The Bishops went so far as to decree that as new parishes were being built the first building was to be a school, then the church.

Next week we celebrate this forward thinking plan of those Bishops. Next week we celebrate '*National Catholic Schools Week*'. We will begin the celebration locally with a Mass on Sunday, followed by an open house (more information is enclosed) and we will conclude it with our annual 'Shake the Flakes' social the following Saturday. Through good economic times and not so good economic times Catholic Schools have been a beacon of hope and growth for the future of our religion. As an observer of world events I believe it is critical for the Catholic Church in America to do everything it can to keep our Catholic Schools strong. Please take some time, either during this special 'set aside week' or any time that works into your schedule to visit us here at Our Lady's School. This school is truly a 'diamond' of education hidden away in Random Lake.

May Our Lord's Mother, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, our patroness, watch over you and your family.

Your servant in Catholic Education  
Rick Erickson, PhD  
Principal/Administrator